



The Good & Beautiful God
Hebrews 12:18-29
February 7, 2010

Week #4: God is Holy

CONNECTION.....30 Minutes

1. Take a few minutes and give people a chance to catch up and connect with one another.

2. **Review the Assigned Soul Training Exercises From Last Week:**

Were you able to spend 5 minutes every day or most days in silence?

Were you able to recite Psalm 23 this week before you fell asleep each night, and again when you awoke.? If so, talk about the experience.

What, if anything, did you learn about God or yourself through these exercises?

What was the most meaningful verse or phrase of Psalm 23 for you? Explain.

3. Be still and spend a few moments in silence and then invite the Spirit of God to join and lead your group.

EXPLORATION.....30 Minutes

Read through Hebrews 12:18-29 and then discuss the questions listed below and/or create some of your own.

Hebrews 12:18-29 (NLT)

¹⁸ You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. ¹⁹ For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. ²⁰ They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling." ²² No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering. ²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel. ²⁵ Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! ²⁶ When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." ²⁷ This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain. ²⁸ Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. ²⁹ For our God is a devouring fire.

1. This passage begins by contrasting the covenant made on Mount Sinai with the covenant made by Jesus' blood. What differences do you see? What images of God's holiness do you see throughout the passage?
2. ²⁸ Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. ²⁹ For our God is a devouring fire.

What do you think it means that God is a devouring fire? If God's love were to burn something out of your life that is holding you back, what would it be?

3. "God is fiercely and forcefully opposed to the things that destroy His people."

What thoughts and feelings do you have when you consider that God longs to remove everything from your life that would destroy you? How should love deal with sin?

ACTION.....30 Minutes

1. Again, find 5 minutes each day to sit in silence.

During this time, your thoughts may run rampant. If so, you can do the following 2 things to help still your mind:

1. Have a notepad nearby to jot down things that may come to your mind. This will help to quiet your mind.
 2. Ease into the 5 minutes by reading the bible for a minute or two.
- This is an exercise designed to help you slow down and become present, more able to focus on God in your midst.
2. Holiness is essentially wholeness – a life that works. Sin is dysfunction or sickness. The #1 spiritual sickness of our day is “hurry sickness”. We are constantly in a hurry because we have overloaded our schedule. When we lack margin in our lives we become tired and lonely and joyless, which seems to invite temptation. We need margin. Margin restores balance and restores our soul, thus increasing our capacity for joy. Joy is a bulwark against temptation. Margin and holiness are related to one another in very deep ways. So, this week, consider some ways in which you can find or create margin in your life:
- Explore scaling back some of your commitments by asking, “Is it essential?” Schedule one less appointment, work one less hour, attend one less meeting.
 - Cut out any unnecessary entertainment activities.
 - If you do something often, consider reducing the frequency without cutting that thing or person out of your life altogether.

As you intentionally create margin and slow down, journal the effects of your doing so. See if you notice any change physically, emotionally, and or spiritually.

3. Share any items of Community News

*The content of this Study Guide is taken from **The Good & Beautiful God** – James Bryan Smith